

The Price of Power

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Category: Covenant

Genre: Romance, Supernatural

Language: English

Characters: Chase C., OC, Tyler S.

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-13 13:30:59

Updated: 2016-04-13 13:30:59

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:45:34

Rating: M

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,812

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Chase Collins may have been vanquished, but he was never truly killed. Somewhere in the realm between life and death, he receives unexpected assistance from a specter of the past, and through his guidance, offers Chase a way back to the world of the living. However, what he fails to take into consideration is that there are always consequences to your actions. Always...

The Price of Power

**AN: After a stroke of inspiration (thank you, Sebastian Stan), I am posting this prologue to see how readers will respond to it. At this time, my focus is on my Mercury Saga, but I do plan to revisit this story at a later time. Feel free to let me know what you think.**

**For Hedda.**

* * *

><p>The Power. It seared through him like the raging inferno he'd been thrown into, burning every cell, every nerve, a paralyzing torment like he'd never known before. Caleb had managed to call upon so much Power in mere moments, and the end result had thrown him into an endless abyss of agonizing darkness.<p>

So this is what it is to die, Chase mused, the one terrible moment of clarity amid his tortured thoughts. The pain. The fear. The fire. All of it filling him until he felt as though he was about to burst into nothingness.

This is death, he repeated to himself. This will be the end of me!

And yet... there was still a small part of him that refused to admit defeat, no matter how dire his current circumstances. A whispering

voice that had been ever present in his mind since a young age, even now telling him, _This is not the end_.

Not the end, he echoed. Notâ€|theâ€|

As he continued his slow descent into nothingness, he gathered what little strength he had left and reachedâ€"reachedâ€"stretching as far as his arm would go. Through the pain, he tried to focus his tumultuous thoughts on his desperate will to simply survive.

Family of old, he pleaded silently, help me find a wayâ€|

It was hard to say how much time passed as he drifted aimlessly through this hell. Minutes? Hours? Days? All he knew was that eventually, he could sense a pulling force, as if an invisible hand had grasped his wrist and was guiding him away from the fathomless abyss.

Guiding him where? He had no sense of direction in this darkness, could not see where he was going, and was so weak from pain that he couldn't fight it. All he could do was clench his teeth and follow where it led.

But how? He thought to himself. How had Caleb managed to summon such an incredible amount of Power so shortly after Ascending? What he'd felt not only rivaled what he'd acquired from his father, but fucking _surpassed_ it. Another must have willed him Power; he'd been nowhere near his equal when the battle began, and there was no other possible explanation for his defeat. So who'd been the one to sacrifice themselves for their precious friend? Reid? Tyler? Who?

And why did he feel the very distinct absence of Power from his own aura?

Damn him, Chase thought bitterly, the pain still coursing through him. Damn them all to hellâ€|

He cried out when the hand tightened around his wrist, sending even more intense lines of fire shooting down his arm.

_Silence, boy. _

He was still groaning in discomfort, but he went still, angling his head. It was hard to say if the voice had been beside him or in his head, and for an instant, an undeniable sense of fear began to seize his heart. _Whoâ€|are you?_

Thou hast called; I came, was the cryptic response.

Despite the surrounding heat, the words caused the blood in his veins to freeze. _What?_

I came for thee, the voiceâ€"a man's voiceâ€"repeated, _as none other would_.

He couldn't place his finger on it, but something about the voice seemed soâ€|_old_. Ancient. And though a great sense of warning flared deep within his chestâ€|at the same time, he felt utterly compelled to listen. _Who are you?_

But the voice didn't respond. Instead, the grip on his wrist became firmer yet as the pulling force increased, accelerating them to a speed that had Chase's eyes squeezing shut and teeth clenching tightly. What the hell are you doing? He wanted to scream, but lacked the strength to do anything but try to brace himself against the disorienting velocity surging them through the dark. Was this all a trick? A demon sent to wickedly lull him into a sense of hope only to drag him back into the heart of the fire once more? Perhaps an act of vengeance from Pogue over the spell he'd cast upon Kate? He wouldn't receive any answers; that much he knew as they continued to hurtle through the suffocating black, resigning himself to the fact that this was likely be his fate for all eternityâ€|

But then there was a definite shift in the atmosphere, and he couldn't hold back a gasp of shock when they nearly came to a full stop. His head was spinning from the sudden shift, and he had to fight back the urge to vomit. Fuck, he thought, still too paralyzed to even bring his free hand to his aching forehead. He'd almost rather endure the burning pain still rushing through him than be subjected to this.

Until he realizedâ€|that the darkness was no longer as all-encompassing as it once had been. Opening his eyes, his vision was horribly blurred, but he saw that it was still dark. It was a darkness he was used to, though: the dark of night itself. In a place he wasn't familiar with. He blinked, still trying to ease the churning in his stomach. Where are we?

Where thou needst to be at this time. _

That answered absolutely none of his questions. And where exactly is that? _

Fear not_, the voice assured, bringing Chase's hand out and placing it upon something he couldn't quite discern. The healing shall commence. _

His brow furrowed. What is this? What are you trying to do?

—

Thine Power has nearly faded; it is the only way to restore thyself.

—

He was still confused, even as the burning pain in his palm began to dull. What are youâ€"?

Silence boy_, the voice hissed. Concentrate! _

On what? _

Feel her heart; her spirit. Feel how strong they are together, and take that unto thyself. _

Her? He snapped his eyes shut, shaking his head. What are you talking about? Who is she? _

One who will help thee regain thine strength, and in turn, shall guarantee the survival of my line. _

Chase's eyes slowly widened. Survival ofâ€|? Holy shit. It dawned on

him that calling upon_ family of old _might have given him much more than he'd bargained for_. Are you_-

I will teach thee my ways, he could almost feel the sinister smile in the words, and he wasn't whether he should be sickened or pleased at the notion of being mentored by none other than John Putnam.

Focus.

Focus, he whispered in his own mind, closing his eyes. Focus. In truth, he wasn't sure how he could focus when his body still burned incessantly. But then something strange was happening that caused him to take pause. The heat beneath his palm: it was _warm_. Not the fiery pain attacking him from all sides, but a gentle warmth against his skin that had his brows twitching in surprise. The longer his hand remained where Putnam had laid it, the more that sensation seemed to creep slowly to his wrist, gradually banishing the pain from his nerves.

_What's happening? _ He asked.

It has begun. Concentrate; do not let go. Let her heartbeat guide thee towards greater clarity. Even as he said it, the invisible hand lifted from his own, allowing Chase to act of his own volition. _Thou hast Power in thee yet, boy; ne'er forget the resilience of thine legacy._

Yes, Chase thought. Yes! That was what he needed to hear. That his Power hadn't abandoned him completely, and that there was a chance to regain what he'd already lost. That alone gave him the incentive he needed to take a deep breath and center his thoughts on the comforting warmth spreading through the bones in his hand, and how much he wanted _that _warmth to reach even further. The more he pictured this in his mind, the more he seemed to draw into himself, expelling burning sensation as it traveled up his entire arm, little by little. Take it, he told himself. Take what she has...

He opened his eyes, amazed to see that even the blurriness was decreasing, and he realized that he was suspended over someone's bed. Blinking rapidly, he was finally able to make out the unmistakable outline of a young woman laying beneath the white comforter, her breaths steady but shallow while his hand remained on her chest. It was obvious that his actions were having a tangible effect on her, further evident in the furrowing of her delicately arched brows. Somehow, he knew she wouldn't wake, even with him looming so close to her. He closed his eyes for a long moment and took a deep breath before he opened them again, the details of her face now sharply defined in the darkness of her room. Chase tilted his head in recognition. Hers was a face he'd seen traversing the crowded halls of Spencer Academy, her dark hair flowing behind her as she smiled and laughed with her friends. A junior, if memory served. He'd never spoken to her, but he vaguely recalled seeing her at swim practices as well.

As the pain continued to fade, his eyes narrowed. _Why her?_

He couldn't see Putnam, but heard his eerie chuckle in his mind. _Thou hast much to learn, young one, but in time, ye shall come to understand the depths of Power that few have ever known. _

How enticing the words were to his ears, so much so that had he not

been focusing solely on banishing the pain, Chase's lips would have curved into a wide grin. To be able to acquire such Power, a Power that even he and the other Sons of Ipswich had at best only heard rumored in myths and legends. But to be able to master it, perhaps even find a way to put a stopper on the accelerated aging process once and for all...

If this girl was going to be the key to all he wanted and more, then so be it.

Looking down at her with solid black eyes, Chase kept his focus on the feel of her under his palm as he continued to drain her life force. Slowly. Carefully. Feeling the gradual ebb of burning fire from his nerves as shaking breaths continued to pass through her lips.

Teach me, his mind whispered to Putnam. Teach me how to use her. Teach me everything I need to know...

End
file.